

SARS – Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

Frequently Asked Questions

April 3, 2003

What is SARS?

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a severe form of respiratory illness, accompanied by a high fever. SARS should not be confused with the common cold.

Who is at risk of getting SARS?

SARS cases continue to be reported mainly among people who have had direct close contact with an infected person, such as those sharing a household with a SARS patient and health care workers who did not use infection control procedures while taking care of a SARS patient. There is no indication of community spread in the United States at this time. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continue to monitor this situation very closely. People who are at most risk of getting SARS are those who have traveled since February 1, 2003, to:

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|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| * Peoples' Republic of China | * Singapore |
| (i.e., Mainland China and Hong Kong | * Hanoi |
| Special Administrative Region) | * Vietnam |

If I have not traveled to these countries recently, am I at risk?

No. You are not at risk unless you have come into contact with someone who has SARS.

What are the signs and symptoms?

In general, SARS begins with a fever greater than 100.4°F [$>38.0^{\circ}\text{C}$]. Other symptoms may include headache, an overall feeling of discomfort, and body aches. Some people also experience mild respiratory symptoms. After 2 to 7 days, SARS patients may develop a dry cough and have trouble breathing.

What if I have some of these symptoms, but I have not traveled to the countries listed above or been in contact with someone who has SARS?

Many of these symptoms are also symptoms of colds, flu and allergies.

What if I have traveled to the areas listed above and I'm having these symptoms?

Contact your doctor immediately to be evaluated. While waiting to see your doctor, cover your mouth and nose with tissue when coughing or sneezing. If you have a surgical mask, wear it during close contact with other people. Your doctor will let you know what else to do.

For health related questions, call the Stanislaus County Health Services Agency Communicable Disease Nurses at (209) 558-5678. For information on the Web, you can go to www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars

